

Application No.: 10/647,699
Filed: August 25, 2003
Page 2 of 15

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Group Art Unit: 3744

Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the Summary of the Invention as follows:

The invention addresses the shortcomings of prior art cup holders and relates to a thermal conditioning beverage container holder for holding different sizes and shapes of beverage containers while controlling the temperature of the beverage in the beverage container. The beverage container holder of the invention comprises a housing defining a chamber sized to receive at least one beverage container and having an access opening permitting access to the chamber. A convection airflow generator is fluidly coupled to the chamber and configured to deliver thermally conditioned air to the chamber. Also, a beverage container support within the chamber is configured to support beverage containers having different vertical heights and different cross-sectional area sizes.

The beverage container support can include first and second recesses located within the chamber, where the first recess is configured to receive the bottom of the beverage container having a first maximum cross-sectional area and the second recess is configured to receive the bottom of a beverage container having a second maximum cross-sectional area that is larger than the first maximum cross-sectional area.

The beverage container support can include a plate having at least one opening for receiving a beverage container and which is movable between a first position, where the plate overlies a lower portion of the chamber and reduces the effective cross-sectional area of the chamber, and a second position, where the plate is withdrawn from overlying relationship to the lower portion of the chamber. In this way, the beverage holder is configured to hold a beverage container of small cross-sectional area in the first position than in the second position.

In one aspect, the beverage container support is part of the housing and forms the bottom of the chamber. The housing further comprises a peripheral sidewall extending upwardly from the container support and terminating in an upper lip that defines a chamber opening. The peripheral sidewall comprises an inlet fluidly coupled to the convection airflow generator through which conditioned air is delivered into the chamber.

The thermal conditioning beverage container holder can include a storage chamber and a storage chamber cover for selectively covering the storage chamber. As well, the thermal

Application No.: 10/647,699
Filed: August 25, 2003
Page 3 of 15

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conditioning beverage container holder can include multiple segments movably mounted to the housing for selectively closing the access opening. In another aspect, the thermal conditioning beverage container holder is configured to be mounted in a motor vehicle between the front driver and passenger seats.

In a further aspect, a thermal conditioning beverage container holder according to the invention comprises a housing defining an open chamber sized to receive a beverage container and having an access opening permitting access to the chamber. A convection airflow generator is fluidly coupled to the chamber and configured to deliver thermally conditioned air to the chamber. A plate has at least one opening for receiving a beverage container and is movable between a first position, where the plate overlies the chamber and reduces the effective cross-sectional area of the chamber, and a second position, where the plate is withdrawn from overlying relationship to the chamber such that the beverage holder is configured to hold a smaller circumference beverage container in the first position than in the second position. A beverage container support is located within the chamber and configured to provide bottom support for beverage containers having different bottom circumferences. Preferably, the plate is removably mounted within the chamber for reducing the size of the beverage container that can be received within the chamber when the plate is mounted within the chamber. Also, preferably, the plate is spaced above the container support when the plate is in the first position.

The beverage container support can include first and second recesses located within the chamber, where the first recess is configured to receive the bottom of a beverage container having a first maximum cross-sectional area and the second recess is configured to receive the bottom of a beverage container having a second maximum cross-sectional area that is larger than the first maximum cross-sectional area. In one embodiment, the housing defines a console for a motor vehicle and is sized to fit between the front seats. The thermal conditioning beverage container holder can further include a storage chamber and a storage chamber cover for selectively covering the storage chamber.

In yet a further aspect of the invention, a thermal conditioning beverage container holder comprises a housing defining a chamber sized to receive at least one beverage container and having an access opening permitting access to the chamber. A convection airflow generator is

Application No.: 10/647,699
Filed: August 25, 2003
Page 4 of 15

Examiner: William E. Tapolcai
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fluidly coupled to the chamber and configured to deliver thermally conditioned air to the chamber. A resizing element is provided within the chamber so that the thermal conditioning beverage container holder can support and accommodate beverage containers having different vertical heights and different cross-sectional area sizes.

In one embodiment, the resizing element comprises first and second recesses located within the chamber. The first recess is configured to receive the bottom of a beverage container having a first maximum cross-sectional area and the second recess is configured to receive the bottom of a beverage container having a second maximum cross-sectional area that is larger than the first maximum cross-sectional area. The first and second recesses can be nested.

The resizing element can include a recess configured to receive the bottom of a beverage container having a cross-sectional area that is smaller than the cross-sectional area of the bottom of a different beverage container that otherwise can be supported by the thermal conditioning beverage container holder. Also, the resizing element can include a plate having at least one opening for receiving a beverage container and which is movable between a first position, where the plate overlies a lower portion of the chamber and reduces the effective cross-sectional area of the chamber, and a second position, where the plate is withdrawn from overlying relationship to the lower portion of the chamber such that the beverage holder is configured to hold a beverage container of smaller cross-sectional area in the first position than in the second position.